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## **OFFICE OF CUSTOMER FOCUSED GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES FIRST ROUND OF PROJECTS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY, LOWER STATE UTILITY COSTS**

*EmPower TN Program Seeks to Lower Costs by Boosting Energy Efficiency in State Buildings*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – Office of Customer Focused Government Director Terry Cowles announced today project selections for the EmPower TN Program to improve energy efficiency at state buildings and reduce the cost of government. The projects will now move forward for final review by the State Building Commission.

Once approved, state agencies can begin implementing projects, saving energy and money, such as high efficiency heating and cooling upgrades, lighting improvements and energy management control systems.

“I want to thank the Tennessee General Assembly for investing in improvements that will lower state utility costs, reducing the cost of government which benefits all Tennessee taxpayers,” Cowles said. “I appreciate the hard work of the EmPower TN team and all the applicants who helped make this effort possible.”

EmPower TN is an initiative that seeks to lower the state’s utility costs by improving energy efficiency in state buildings. Currently, the state receives approximately 7,000 monthly utility bills and pays an estimated \$193 million annually in total utility costs. Thirty-three projects representing \$33.6 million in EmPower TN funding requests received final selection by the EmPower TN Steering Committee which has an oversight role over the program and is comprised of cross sections of representatives from the legislative branch, state government operations, and higher education. Once fully implemented, these projects will produce an estimated savings of \$4.43 million each year for as many as 20 years.

“Using energy more efficiently is a critical first step in reducing costs and improving operations,” Bob Balzar, director for EmPower TN, said. “Investments in high-efficiency technologies such as building lighting system upgrades and heating and cooling equipment lower energy use and generate cost-saving benefits for many years to come.”

The program began accepting applications in June, following a series of workshops across the state to help promote the effort. The Tennessee General Assembly approved \$43.7 million in funding for 2015-16 to improve efficiency in state facilities and \$6.2 million of that goes toward acquisition and implementation of a statewide energy management system.

More information on EmPower TN and a listing of selected projects are now available at [www.tn.gov/empowertn](http://www.tn.gov/empowertn).

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